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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, March 29, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM THE F.&D.A." Facts from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

--ooOoo--

Let's be tourists today, and travel about the country with our Washington correspondent. She wants us to stop in at various Stations of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, to learn what's new and interesting.

"First stop -- San Francisco. San Francisco Station reports the seizure of one lot of canned pork and beans, seized because of short weight and a misleading label. Although the label showed the picture of a large piece of pork, and referred to the 'generous amount' of pork in the can, examination showed only a very tiny piece of pork in each can.

"From pork and beans to non-sterile bandages: San Francisco Station reports the seizure of 862 gauze roller bandages, 58 packets of cotton applicators, and 123 packets of plain gauze. The gauze bandages were labeled sterilized but examination revealed that they were not sterile. While the cotton wound applicators were not labeled as sterile, it was considered that consumers would expect a product so designated and so intended to be sterile.

"Next stop -- Chicago. Manufacturer of below-standard drugs fined \$4,800, one of the largest fines imposed in recent years under the Federal Food and Drugs Act.

"Next station reporting -- Seattle. FOOD POISONING OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES INVESTIGATED. Sixteen kitchen and dining room employees of a Spokane hotel were made ill from food consumed at the hotel. Immediate medical attention was secured and no fatalities resulted. Attending physicians ascribed the illness to tainted tomato catsup or sauce, so Federal Inspector Fred W. Schultz was assigned to make an investigation. He learned that the Spokane Health Department was making a laboratory examination of all the foods involved, to find out the cause of the poisoning. No bacterial growth was found in the tomato sauce itself, but bacteria were found in spaghetti and succotash, both of which had been prepared with tomato sauce. The sauce showed mixed bacterial growth, streptococci predominating. Authorities concluded that the foods were contaminated during or after their preparation at the hotel, and that no foods from interstate sources were involved.

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"Time out here," says our correspondent, "while Teacher points out the dangers of food carelessly handled in the kitchen -- and it makes no difference whether the kitchen is a big one in a hotel, or a small one in your own home. Now that warm weather is approaching -- at least it's on the way -- be doubly careful not to let perishable foods stand in a warm room. Moist food and warm weather are an ideal combination for bacteria. And let me remind you again that there's no time like the present to send for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1374, 'Care of Food in the Home.'

"Now, on with our tour of Food and Drug Stations. Let's stop at New Orleans. This Station reports a total of around 109,000 pounds of filthy flour condemned by the Texas Bureau of Foods and Drugs during the last three months of 1936. The flour was -- Well, we won't go into that. The flour has been condemned. That's the main thing.

"Next stop -- Philadelphia. Here's something new and different in the way of adulteration -- dried mushrooms adulterated with pieces of iron, to make them weigh more, and consequently bring a better price. Here's the story: Investigating a complaint from Wilmington, Delaware, Federal Inspector Smith discovered that dealers were offering, at two dollars a pound, dried mushrooms, in some of which he found small pieces of iron, inserted in the mushrooms before they were dried. Some of the metal pieces strikingly resembled shrapnel and fragments of hand grenades. However, authorities decided that the metal was added to the mushrooms only to increase the weight of these rather expensive delicacies. Indications were that the mushrooms were of foreign origin, and had been reshipped from New York City.

"Now that concludes our tour. If we had a little more time today," says our correspondent, "I'd read you a report entitled 'Federal Courts Fine Thirty Food and Drug Shippers During January.' However, we won't go very far into that report. We might mention just a few of the many patent medicines seized for violation of the Food and Drugs Act -- 'Old Trusty Cough Mixture,' a sirup containing creosote, plant extracts, and aromatics, recommended for bronchial and pulmonary troubles in pets; 'Old Trusty Ear Drops,' consisting of an oil (found to be rancid), an emulsifier, and small amounts of calcium sulfate, also recommended for treatment of pets; and 'Old Trusty Tonic,' 'Old Trusty Vermifuge, Jr.,' and 'Old Trusty Vi-Ti.' These products violated the Food and Drugs Act in that their labels did not tell the truth; the products themselves would not do what their labels claimed for them."

And that's all of today's report from the Federal Food and Drug Administration. If you need a copy of the bulletin our correspondent mentioned, "Care of Food in the Home," send your name and address to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.
